The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news comments and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the federal, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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SAVE FOOD—
Help Relieve
Famine Abroad

WHOLE NO. 1828 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 1946 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 36, NO. 17

Green Asks Senate to Restore OPA Controls Killed By House

Delivers Stinging Rebuke At Critics of Program; Urges Year's Extension

Washington, D. C.—In a stinging rebuke to the House for what he termed a vote to "strangle price control" at the expense of the American worker, AFL President William Green appealed to the Senate to rescue this legislation and approve an extension of controls for a full year.

"American workers r e deeply disappointed by the action of the House of Representatives in adopting amendments which would strangle price control," Mr. Green said.

"The House bill, if left unchanged, threatens to force the cost of living up to unprecedented heights and to endanger our entire economy. It is likely to usher in an era of unbridled profiteering at the expense of the nation's wage earners.

"The American Federation of Labor does not believe in the perpetuation of government controls. We favor the abolition of the OPA as soon as such action can be taken safely. We undertake such a move now, when production of many necessities of life is still far below consumer demand, is an open invitation to suicidal inflation.

"Therefore, the American Federation of Labor calls upon the Senate to reject the House bill and to continue OPA for another year without crippling amendments."

Mr. Green announced he will present detailed testimony in favor of extending the OPA act for another year when he appears soon before the Senate Banking and Currency Committee.

Meanwhile there were indications that President Truman will veto the OPA extension measure if it goes through the Senate in the form adopted by the House, which, in strong revolt, virtually stripped the agency of its major controls.

The vote to send the bill to the Senate was 355 to 42.

OPA Administrator Paul Porter warned Congress that the bill, in its present form, practically ends price control, will add billions of dollars to the cost of living and seriously jeopardize the nation's stabilization program.

The Gossett de-control amendment, Porter said, immediately would sweep away price controls on meats, milk and nearly all dairy products except butter, on coal, shoes, wool and rayon textiles, on lumber and all kinds of garments made from wool and rayon.

The amendment also would require the lifting of ceilings on many farm products and on many basic industrial products in such fields as metals, textiles, leather, rubber, chemicals, coke, stone and glass products.

Altogether, it would wipe out ceilings on July 1, or shortly thereafter, on commodities making up at least half of the cost of living.

Joining Porter in a vigorous condemnation of the bill, Stabilization Director Chester Bowles declared the measure would doom price control no less revised by the Senate.

AFL UNION SCORES GAINS IN FRISCO RAIL CONTRACT

Washington, D. C.—Its first full-fledged victory with a railroad was recorded by the AFL Technical Engineers, Architects and Draftsmen when Local 201 negotiated a pact with the Frisco, aided by the National Mediation Board.

Union President Foster J. Pratt revealed that the contract provides raises of $20 a month for the engineers, draftsmen and other professional employees.

Other concessions by the railroad include recognition of seniority, paid vacation of 1 to 3 weeks annually, time and a half for overtime after 8 hours a day; grievance machinery, a sliding scale of sick leave pay and other gains. Negotiations are under way with several other railroads, Pratt said.

AFL IS PRAISED BY ELLIS FOR HELP IN KEEPING ORDER

Washington, D. C.—Warm tribute to the American Federation of Labor for its "worthwhile contribution toward keeping our economic situation in order" was voiced on the House floor by Rep. Hubert Ellis of West Virginia.

Pointing out that there is an inclination to overlook commendable service on the part of others during these trying times, Rep. Ellis lauded AFL unions for their conduct after V-J Day.

"It is indeed gratifying to note that this great labor organization has stayed on the job and bargained wisely in the price ceilings while others struck and . . . caused not a bulge but a definite and serious break in the price-inflation lines," Rep. Ellis declared.

Veterans' Housing Program Offers Over 2 Million Jobs

Washington, D. C.—More than 2,000,000 workers will be needed this year in the veterans' housing program, under which 1,200,000 homes will be built, the United States Labor Department declared.

Of this number, 1,000,000 will be required on the building sites and a slightly larger number in production of builders' supplies. This 1946-47 emergency construction program is 5 times the size of the 1945 building effort and substantially greater than in any year since the 1920's. The average monthly starting rate must be 5 times that of February, 1946, when erection of 40,000 homes was begun.

These figures are revealed in a joint statement by Secretary of Labor Schwellenbach and Wilson W. Wyatt, national housing administrator and special expediter of the emergency housing program. For home construction alone the skilled services of about 350,000 carpenters, 80,000 painters, 50,000 plumbers, 40,000 bricklayers, 10,000 electricians and an equal number of plasterers will be required. Three out of every 5 of the on-site construction employes will be skilled workers and foremen.

There also will be about 40,000 semi-skilled and approximately 325,000 unskilled laborers. At least 1,200,000 additional workers will be needed for essential public construction, including hospitals, schools, highways and similar projects.

The Labor Department, the joint statement declared, will be responsible for solving all manpower problems of the housing program. The U. S. Employment Service will recruit workers. The Bureau of Labor Statistics will provide local and national figures on progress of the program, number of workers employed and month-to-month changes in wholesale and dealer-to-contractor prices of building materials. The Labor Department statement added:

"The U. S. Conciliation Service has established a special program to keep labor relations adjusted so that there will be a free flow of building materials to the housing sites. Apprentice training service will cooperate closely with employers and building trades unions in establishing apprentice-training programs to help provide the skilled workers necessary. The Wage Adjustment Board will give expeditious handling to wage adjustment cases in the residential construction industry."

Say, Listen!

Forthcoming radio programs in the "Cross Section—AFL" series broadcast each Saturday at 3:45 p.m., Eastern Time, over the nationwide Columbia Broadcasting System, are listed below for the information of trade unionists everywhere so that they may plan advance plans to tune in:

April 27—Coal Mining. Members of the United Mine Workers of America will be interviewed from a mine of the Truax Traer Coal Co. at Kayford, W. Va.

May 4—Printing Trades. John B. Haggerty, president of the International Allied Printing Trades Association; and Oscar Whitehouse, secretary of the union employers of the Printing Industry of America, will talk from a printing plant in New York City.

May 11—Truck Transportation. Members of the Teamsters' Union will be interviewed from an over-the-road luncheon stop in the Chicago area.

CROSS SECTION--AFL

No. 2—Metal Trades

Featuring Henry Kaiser, famed ship builder; Tom Rotel, spokesman for the AFL Bay Cities Metal Trades Council; Duke Morrison, a worker in the Kaiser shipyards in Richmond, Calif., and Dwight Cooke, a CBS commentator, who interviewed them at the giant Richmond plant.

A bright picture of the outlook for postwar shipbuilding, based upon the present friendly relationship between management and AFL metal trades unions during the war and since, was revealed to the nation in the second program of the AFL's new radio series, entitled "Cross Section—AFL," over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Citing the no-strike record marked up through the war and continued since V-J Day, both Mr. Kaiser and the union spokesmen expressed the confidence that postwar operations will continue without interruption by labor disputes.

"It's always been my belief that labor relations are human relations, the desire of man to get along with his fellow man and to feel that justice and fair play underline all his dealings," Mr. Kaiser told the radio audience.

"The greatest promise for the future lies in the fact that we (management and labor) did work together harmoniously during all the trying years of war production—long hours, conscription, priorities, high pressure and day and night shifts, and constant anxiety for our loved ones were with us always. And yet we found a way to agree and to carry on.

"The long-awaited future has begun. Peace has its problems no less than war, and we are not afraid. We know we can win the objectives of peace, even as we won those of war, if we continue now to do our best and to know the metal tradesman will do no less."

Calling attention to the tremendous productive record established by the shipyards during the war and since the war, Cooke paid tribute to the equally impressive no-strike record. He asked Tom Rotel to tell his story.

"It originated in the Long Beach convention of the Pacific Coast District Council of Metal Trades (AFL) in 1940," Rotel replied. "A group of employers and union representatives then was called and it discussed the matter. The next year management and union leaders met in Seattle and brought about the Pacific Coast master agreement for shipbuilding, under which we are now working. We just got our heads together and arrived at what we believe is a fair and good agreement.

"Today we are faced with no problems. We go into postwar operations and the agreement continues. We have a continuity clause in the contract which says that neither party can move on the other that it wishes to terminate or amend it, it continues in force."

Morrison told Cooke that he not only enjoyed his work in the shipshop, but that he was most grateful for the no-strike relationship between the company and the AFL trades, a factor which contributes importantly, he said, to his own sense of security and which has encouraged him to build a home for his family.

"That means a lot to me," Morrison said. "I want my pay to keep rolling along. A strike would cut me off. What we gain now to the best we can settled by the unions involved, and this plan has worked out very well."

UNION LABEL ENDORSEMENT BY TRUMAN CITED ON AIR

Washington, D. C.—President Truman's citation of the value of the union label as a protection for consumers was incorporated in a radio program, "The Shield of Protection," presented by the Union Label Trades Department of the AFL over the Mutual Broadcasting System.

Emphasizing the importance of labels as a consumer guide to the consumer's purchase, the program, by persons, the President wrote:

"Through the union label he has knowledge that the men and women who make the product work at fair wages and under decent conditions. By educating consumers in general to the full meaning of the union label, the Union Label Trades Department will enable them to give added support to the establishment and maintenance of fair labor standards."

THOUSANDS OF EMPLOYERS VIOLATE U. S. LABOR LAWS

New York City.—Thousands of employers have been violating federal labor laws, the Walsh-Healey Hour and Public Contracts Division of the U. S. Labor Department revealed.

Studies by government investigators revealed that of 44,950 establishments visited, 32,450 or 72 percent, were found violating the law. It was discovered also that 50 percent were violating the minimum wage and overtime provisions.

The report showed that one out of every four cases of violation concerned an employer failing to pay his workers the required 40-cent per hour required under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employers guilty of such practices, officials said, can be fined up to $10,000, or, in the case of a second violation, can be jailed for six months in addition to the fine. In addition, the worker is entitled to sue for double the back pay due him.

VITAL ISSUES IMPERILED IF CONGRESS QUITS SOON

Washington, D. C.—Many issues highly important to organized labor face a tie-up in Congress under increasing pressure for an early summer adjournment.

Minimum wage legislation, the projected loan to Britain, extension of price control beyond June 30, strike-control legislation, the House-approved bill to return the U. S. Employment Service to the states, veterans' housing, long-range housing legislation, revision of unemployment compensation, the much-discussed national health program, and broadening of the social security structure are some of the vital issues awaiting action.

INFLATION IS CITED IN HOUSING PRICES

Washington, D. C.—Grave warning that inflation already has hit the real estate market was sounded by the National Housing Agency in a report showing that homes that sold for $6,000 or less in 1940 in the Pacific Coast states have skyrocketed an average of 96.3 percent. This compares with a national average rise of 65.1 percent.

Inflation in real estate, the agency's report revealed, has struck hard in every section of the nation, but the northeastern area, extending from Maine to Wisconsin, has experienced price increases slightly below the national average.

In every part of the country, the report declared, inflation has been greater for low-priced homes ($6,000 or less) than for medium-priced homes ($6,000 to $12,000), and there have been accelerated price rises on all property—homes, undeveloped land and prepared building lots—since V-J Day.

This information, the agency said, is based upon a detailed, region-by-region examination, augmented by further data from 469 cities—90 of them 100,000 or more in population and 379 smaller cities and suburban areas.

The survey, disclosing what National Housing Expediter Wilson W. Wyatt described as inflation "far worse even than had been anticipated," was made by presidents of Federal Home Loan banks, regional managers of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, regional expediters of NHA and interregional staff of the Federal Housing Administration, all constituents of the National Housing Agency, of which Mr. Wyatt also is administrator.

The 1940-1946 comparisons showed that while low-priced homes have gone up 65.1 percent in price, medium-priced homes ($6,000-$12,000) have risen 57 percent. Raw land has jumped 61 percent, and fully prepared building lots have gone up 61.8 percent. The figures demonstrate that inflation has occurred mainly in a few overcrowded big cities, but in many and small cities alike, the report stated.

1,000 VETERANS TO LEARN GARMENT TRADE IN BOSTON

Boston—A program for on-the-job training of 200 veterans of Boston is being sponsored by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (AFL). Endorsed by Governor Robert F. Bradford of Massachusetts, it will result eventually in training and eventual employment of 1,000 veterans.

The first 200 will work at the Wenz Manufacturing Company and will earn as much as $1 an hour while learning the garment trade. During the 12-month training period the government, under the Bill of Rights provision, will pay a maximum allowance of $65 a month for single veterans and $90 for married men.

LABOR DEPARTMENT HAILS BLOW AT SWEATSHOPS

Washington, D. C.—Decision of a federal court in New York, holding the wage-hour administration has power to outlaw "industrial homework" so as to prevent wage chiselers, was greeted with commendation of the Labor Department.

In recent years the agency had levied ceilings on the type of work done in most of the needle trade industries. Only by a complete ban could sweat shop conditions in this type of work be eliminated, the agency held.

"We consider this an important victory," a Labor Department spokesman said, "because it will enable us to prevent the return of 'industrial homework', which has been notorious for substandard wages."

WORK CLOTHES PRICE JUMP GIVEN SANCTION OF OPA

Washington, D. C.—Immediate increase of 12 to 15 percent in retail prices for work clothes has been authorized by OPA.

This action, the OPA said, is the direct result of higher prices for raw textiles and cotton, and recent wage increases in the textile industry.

Under the new price schedule workers will pay, for example, $1.79 instead of $1.60 at most independent retail stores for a sanforized chambray workshirt, and $2.75 instead of $2.44 for sanforized denim bib overalls.

Big AFL Campaign In South Seeks Million New Members

Green Sees Home Building Key to Full Employment

Lakeland, Fla.—Hailing the advent of a period of postwar reconstruction, AFL President William Green told the 58th general convention of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America at a mass meeting here he is confident the nation is embarked on a program to provide "new and better homes for the great mass of American families."

This task, he told the delegates, "represents the most strategic and most certain area of full employment in the most realistic sense of that term."

"Good, new homes for families of all incomes mean real postwar reconstruction for every American community," he said. "They mean a stable and steady source of employment opportunity for many years, not only to the building and construction trades, not only to the mechanics and laborers at the site, but also steady and stable jobs in a multitude of industries and occupations which depend on construction of new homes as a source of demand for building materials, equipment, furniture and household appliances, and as a source of the standard of living of the American family.

"Rebouncing America is a big job. There is work in it for everyone. Right here we have a unique and historic chance to launch that job and to get it done, upon the initiative and with full backing of the entire labor movement."

Lashing out at critics who have charged that "high labor costs" are a discouraging factor in home construction, Mr. Green pointed out that in the sale price of the average home (based upon statistics of 1939) the cost of building labor ranged between 24 and 29 per cent, depending on location and other conditions. Comparing this percentage with that of other industries, he stressed that there are 77 major industrial groupings in which labor costs are in excess of 30 per cent of the value of the product. In all of these, he said, a larger proportion of the consumer's dollar goes to labor costs than in home construction.

Outlining the AFL postwar housing program, the original draft of which began to take form in 1944, Mr. Green told the convention:

"The major objective of our program was to bring home ownership within the financial reach of the great mass of wage-earners, of families of moderate income who have not been able to assume the financial burden of buying a new home in the past."

This program, Mr. Green said, is divided into three efforts:

First, to reduce the cost of completely built homes by improving the FHA system of mortgage insurance.

Second, to the goal of a decent house for every family, through extension and improvement of the low-rent, slum-clearance program suspended during the war.

Third, to protect the value of all homes in the community and to safeguard the health and welfare of every family through a large program of long-term redevelopment of cities.

The major features of this program, Mr. Green said, are embodied in the pending Wagner-Taft-Ellender bill. He expressed hope that this measure eventually will include a requirement that not less than prevailing wages will be paid in construction of all FHA-insured homes.

New Code To Protect Veterans In On-the-Job Training Program

Washington, D. C.—A complete "fair practices" code to protect veterans engaged in on-the-job training from exploitation by unscrupulous employers was issued by the Reemployment and Retraining Administration. This is a coordinated program on ex-servicemen's problems, and functions within the Labor Department.

Spokesmen for organized labor, industry, veterans' groups and educational institutions helped draft the code. Copies have been addressed to all interested parties. Many of the standards set forth be adopted throughout the nation as "minimum safeguards" for veterans.

Pronouncing the code "an excellent document," Marion H. Hedges, research director of the Electrical Workers (AFL), expressed hope it will be put into operation quickly.

"As things stand now, there's chaos in the on-the-job training field. Many states have permitted all sorts of phoney employers to get in on so-called 'training' institutions. Few states have any real regulation," he said.

"This code gives them an opportunity to bring order out of chaos. I'm sure state directors of the Electrical local labor organizations will fight to have their states put the proposed standards in operation."

At the outset, the document makes it clear that the $65 to $90 a month payments made to GI's engaged in training are "not intended as a dole to the veteran nor as a subsidy to the employer."

"The value of the program would be lost and its integrity discredited if it were used as a cheap labor scheme or if veterans were trained for non-existant jobs," the statement declared.

In the case of regular apprentice training, there are adequate safeguards now, along with supervision by joint labor-management committees, the document stressed. The same holds true in other forms of training, it was explained.

Among requirements proposed in the code are these standards as these:

An employer should submit in writing to the appropriate state agency full details on the job for which the "vet" is being trained; the length of time such training will take; wages to be paid at each step; the operations to be learned, and the comparable wage paid to workers already trained in such work.

Also, the job should be one that normally requires training of at least 500 hours; wages should conform to prevailing rates, or to union agreements, a job should be available to the "vet" after training is completed; the training period should not be "stretched out"; the plant should have adequate facilities for such training; records should be kept of the veteran's progress.

No employer should be allowed to engage in veterans' training unless these standards and others contained in the code are complied with, state governors were urged.

GI's Given 'Good Break' In Factory Employment

Washington, D. C.—Veterans emerging from the armed services are being given an increasingly "good break" at jobs in manufacturing industries, the Labor Department revealed.

The number of veterans employed in such industries between December 15 and January 15 climbed by nearly a fourth to a total of 1,370,000, a survey by the department showed. The new gain raises the proportion of ex-servicemen in this field to 11½ percent of the total number of factory employes.

The priority given veterans is demonstrated, the report declared, in the fact that they constituted 40 percent of all workers hired in manufacturing during January, when they were greater job security. The lay-off rate among veterans is 20 percent below that of non-veterans, the department stated.

Trade unions were credited with major responsibility in the good showing, although the report did not say so. Unions have been active in seeing that veterans are restored to their old jobs and in placement of many who did not have jobs before they entered military service.

RETAIL CLERKS SCORE

San Jose, Calif.—A precedent in the retail industry for both wage increase and a contract guaranteeing a profit-sharing plan has been set in the agreement signed by the Retail Clerks' Union, Local 428, (AFL) and Hart's Department Store.

Union Secretary J. P. McLoughlin announced basic pay raises amount to 18½ percent on an overall basis.

CONCILIATORS' BOX SCORE

Washington, D. C.—A "box-score" presented by Edgar L. Warren, chief of the U. S. Conciliation Service, shows that nearly 90 percent of the nation's labor disputes submitted to conciliators wind up in settlements.

In 449 of the 524 cases where strike votes had been taken in March, the report declared, agreements were effected without work stoppage. Out of 483 others, conciliators termed set differences in 421.

Drive Will Be Directed By Leaders of Twelve State Labor Federations

Washington, D. C.— Plans to launch the most intensive organizing drive ever undertaken in the South by the trade union movement were announced by AFL President William Green.

The main goal of the campaign is to enroll 1,000,000 new members in AFL unions in the next year, Mr. Green said. The drive will be directed entirely by the executive officers of the 12 State Federations of Labor in the South and George L. Googe, AFL southern representative.

At a weekend meeting in Atlanta, AFL executive leaders completed plans for the third biennial Southern Labor Conference to be held May 11 and 12 at Asheville, N. C.

The organizing drive will be launched at this conference, which will be attended by delegates from 8,000 AFL local unions now functioning in the South, city and district councils and state federations of labor.

Mr. Green, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany, Vice President William L. Hutcheson, John L. Lewis and other members of the AFL Executive Council, will address the conference, along with officers of the Railway Employes Department, the Building and Construction Trades Department, the Metal Trades Department, the Government Employes Council and the Union Label Trades Department.

The Spring meeting of the AFL Executive Council will be held here immediately following the conference at Asheville and presumably will consider ways and means of supporting the southern drive with assistance from the national organization as well as all affiliated unions.

The Southern Labor Conference, the largest regional labor gathering in the nation, will include delegates from West Virginia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky.

Among important items on the agenda, besides the organizing drive, are:

1. Coordination of national and state legislative and political activities in the South.

2. Planning of reconversion and expansion of industrial activity in the South through union-management cooperation.

3. Marshalling of labor forces to resist inroads of Communism and subversive elements.

4. Mobilization of labor support for the advancement of the economic and social welfare of southern agricultural workers, cooperation with farmers' organizations.

The Southern Labor Conference originally was scheduled to be held in 1944 but had to be postponed because of wartime travel restrictions. Attendance will be so large that special arrangements had to be made with the railroads and hotels to accommodate the delegates and guests.

WINE, LIQUOR UNION PUTS 800 VETERANS INTO JOBS

New York City—More than 200 veterans with no previous experience in the trade have been put on the job at the full union scale by the New York City Local 1 of the Wine, Liquor and Distillery Workers (AFL).

Reemployment of more than 600 of its members who have been in service also has been arranged by the union. Eighty percent have returned and each has been found a job waiting for him, with all benefits of union wages and conditions.

MAJORITY OF N. Y. CITY FIREMEN JOIN AFL UNION

New York City—Nearly all officers and men of the New York Fire Department have enrolled in the American Federation of Labor.

This development came at a meeting of an independent group including 1,100 officers, ranging from lieutenant to chief.

At a ceremony at the office of the Uniformed Firemen's Association, the Uniformed Fire Officers' Association received its charter as Local 852 in the International Association of Fire Fighters. Captain Elmer A. Ryan is president of the new group.

BOILERMAKERS DRAFT PLANS FOR INTENSIVE ORGANIZING

Kansas City, Kan.—Intensive organizing drives are to be inaugurated soon as the result of plans drafted at the recent Boilermakers' (AFL) International Conference in Denver, the brotherhood announced.

These campaigns are to be pressed vigorously in all branches of the boilermakers' trade, with special attention to areas not previously thoroughly organized. Plans also were made to build a stronger organization in shipyards, navy yards, railroads, petroleum industry, contract shops and other fields.